

Help from Local Business

What Are They?

Raising support and income from local business is often a new and untried task for voluntary organisations or community groups. However, many small groups do have good relationships with individual local businesses.

You will be aware of the employers of those involved in your voluntary organisation or community group. The personal contact you have with them will make these the easiest to approach.

You will know the businesses in your area. Note phone numbers and phone them to find out who it is you will want to meet with.

Who Can Apply?

Many local businesses like to help the community where they operate. Businesses often help according to the personal inclination of managers and owners. Anyone can ask. There are no rules.

What Do They Fund?

Most local businesses have no formal policy and will help according to the merit of the cause and the personal relationship with those asking for help. They may be able to be very flexible in their giving and be very generous.

How Do You Apply?

Make a personal approach. In order of preference:

- Making an appointment to see someone in person
- Have a telephone conversation
- Write a personalised letter
- Send a general email

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£ How Much?

Local businesses will vary considerably in the amount they can afford to give. They may be more inclined to help in non monetary ways. They might give goods and services. They might encourage staff to help, using professional skills. They might allow you to use their equipment e.g. use of minibus or van, photocopier, or premises for an event.

Be appropriate in what you ask for. Asking for too much shows a lack of understanding of their business. Asking for too little means you have to ask more businesses.

+ Pros:

- No bureaucracy – just ask
- Can often respond immediately
- You can ask for exactly what you need

- Cons:

- Depends on personal contacts
- Usually small amounts
- Some causes more popular than others, e.g. children's toy appeals do better than work with offenders

➔ Further Information:

To find out what businesses operate in your area you can refer to Thompsons and Yellow Pages.

Better still is to find out who are members of the local philanthropic organisations such as the Rotary Club or Lions See Websites: www.rotaryclubs.co.uk and www.lions.org.uk

Your Chamber of Commerce will publish a directory of members with contact details and should be able to give you advice. See Website: www.chamberonline.co.uk

Use these websites to find local branches.